



May 19, 2023

Chair & Representative Jamie Long
Rules and Legislative Administration
c/o Jeanne Stuart, Committee Administrator
459 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Testimony in Support of HF173/ SF37

Dear Chair Long and Members of the Rules and Legislative Administration Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

LWV Minnesota urges your full and unamended support for this important opportunity to let voters choose equal rights for all on the 2024 ballot. This should perhaps be the easiest bill for you to support today:

- It just received passage with strong bipartisan support from your colleagues in the Senate.
- It builds on HF197 which both the MN House and Senate have already passed, urging the US Congress to accept that the requirements have already been met to make the Equal Rights Amendment the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution.
- Nearly 75% of Americans support the ERA according to polling from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.
- Including Equal Rights for ALL into the MN State Constitution would provide an essential tool to help women and other individuals fight back against discrimination such as unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, and limited access to comprehensive health care - discrimination that continues today, regardless of other laws in place.

- Your Yes vote simply puts the question to our voters, and lets them decide if this noble goal within our state deserves constitutional protection - **to provide “a specific guarantee that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by this state** or any of its cities, counties, or other political subdivisions on account of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry, or national origin.”

The League of Women Voters was born out of a 72 year struggle for women's suffrage, and has worked across the country for 104 years to empower voters and defend democracy. Over this long history, we have consistently and effectively worked to ensure that women and all genders are able to be treated equally as “we the people.” Please join us in passing this important legislation wanted by the people, and already approved on a bipartisan basis by the MN Senate. Thank you for your service and dedication to Minnesotans.

We urge you to vote YES on SF37.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Witte". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michelle" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Witte".

Michelle Witte, Executive Director
League of Women Voters of Minnesota

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